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Citation for published version:

Grumett, D 2007, 'Yves de Montcheuil: Action, Justice and the Kingdom in Spiritual Resistance to Nazism', *Theological Studies*, vol. 68, no. 3, pp. 618-641. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056390706800307>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1177/004056390706800307](https://doi.org/10.1177/004056390706800307)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Theological Studies

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YVES DE MONTCHEUIL: ACTION, JUSTICE AND THE KINGDOM IN SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE TO NAZISM¹

DAVID GRUMETT

[The few existing studies of the Jesuit martyr and theologian Yves de Montcheuil focus on aspects of his doctrinal theology and biography. This article combines those considerations with philosophical and political ones by examining how his spiritual resistance to Nazism emerges from his study of action and justice in the work of Nicolas Malebranche and Maurice Blondel. Montcheuil's oeuvre culminates in a lived theology of sacrifice, and provides a valuable example of how the French war experience contributed to doctrinal development in areas such as faith and action, liberation theology, church-state relations, and lay ecclesiology.]

In recent decades, deep reflection and impassioned debate have been provoked in Christian theology by the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime against the Jewish people and other groups, the personal suffering inflicted on numerous individual lives, and the countless heroic acts of resistance to persecution. Much of this theology has German and Protestant origins, and has posed many searching and challenging questions: Where was God in Auschwitz? Why did God constitute the world in such a way that unjust suffering on a massive scale was possible? What is the place or value of suffering in God's plan for the salvation of the world? In this essay I wish, whilst in no way denying the crucial importance of these and associated questions, to consider a different type of

theological response to Nazism, as found in the writing and witness of a little-known Jesuit theologian and martyr.

Yves de Montcheuil provided the spiritual resistance of the French church to Nazism with major theological impetus and practical assistance.² Henri de Lubac, writing in 1987, nevertheless described him as “almost forgotten,” whilst Étienne Fouilloux referred, in 1995, to his progressively declining theological influence over the preceding quarter century as a “second death.”³ Born in 1900 in Paimpol on the north coast of Brittany, Montcheuil attended a Jesuit college in St Helier on Jersey as a child and entered the Society of Jesus in 1917, remaining in St Helier at the Maison Saint-Louis. This was technically an exile: clergy and members of religious orders were not permitted to teach in French schools following the 1902 Combes legislation secularising the education system, and parents who wished their children to benefit from a religious education would send them abroad, often to French religious communities in exile. Yet Jersey was not far across the water from his home town. In 1919, he commenced his scholasticate in Canterbury, which continued in 1922 following two years’ compulsory military service in France. He was awarded a licentiate in philosophy from the Sorbonne, and in 1934, following four years’ study in Lyons, a doctorate by the Gregorian University. He then accepted a teaching post at the Institut Catholique in Paris, which he held until being shot by the Gestapo on 10 August 1944.⁴ Montcheuil was among the most theologically significant catholic martyrs of the Second World War, developing a theology of action, justice and the kingdom that he lived out in active spiritual witness against Nazism.

Montcheuil's doctoral thesis, "L'Intervention de Malebranche dans la querelle du pur amour," addressed the notion of disinterested love (*l'amour désintéressé*) in the Augustinian theology of Nicholas Malebranche, and sought to resolve aspects of the disputes about whether or not this conception of love amounted to a quietist one. Monthcheuil wished to demonstrate the impossibility of any apolitical notion of love, arguing that a true love of self is inseparable from the self's love of God and of justice. These loves might, moreover, have practical implications, and call people of faith to shape the world in greater conformity with the order of justice divinely willed for it.

Malebranche had argued, in his 1680 *Treatise on Nature and Grace*, that God acts in nature mostly by means of his general will.⁵ This enabled Malebranche to develop an account of the existence of natural evils not as directly willed by God, but as the result of God willing a world reflecting divine wisdom and simplicity by producing the greatest number of effects by means of the fewest laws. Malebranche believed, as an occasionalist, that God is the only true cause of effects in nature, but also maintained that human freedom is among the greatest of the effects of divine wisdom.

These intuitions provide the background to the 1684 *Treatise on Ethics*, in which Malebranche argued that moral action requires a love of the immutable order which God reveals to those souls under grace.⁶ He insisted that God is the greatest human good on the grounds that God is the sole origin of happiness. He believed, moreover, that morally good action, being grounded in God, confers happiness on the self. If God is the soul's greatest good, and love of God is necessary for the moral life, then acting morally will necessarily have the effect of bringing the soul happiness. Malebranche insisted—unsurprisingly, in light of the importance of human freedom in his theodicy—that the love needed for moral

action required the free exercise of the will. The good will freely strives to be guided by the objective relations of perfection which hold among the various different possible objects of love. The intensity of the soul's love for particular objects should, moreover, match the order of perfection of those objects, with those situated in the higher attainable orders being sought in preference to those in the lower ones.

In 1699, Malebranche published his *Treatise on the Love of God*, accompanied by *Three Letters to Lamy*.⁷ In these writings, he rejected the charge of François Lamy (1636–1711) that the *Treatise on Ethics* advocated the quietist position that moral action is derived from a disinterested “pure love” of God. This is the controversy on which Montcheuil focuses, believing it to be crucial to a proper understanding of Malebranche's theology of love (*MQ* 16), and more widely, to the rehabilitation of Malebranche as a figure of theological and spiritual stature. Malebranche states clearly his belief that a disordered love of self should be contrasted not with pure love of God, as in the quietist position with which Lamy had identified him, but rather with an ordered love of creation, which includes the soul's love of itself. The political implications of his theory are most clearly elucidated in the chapter of Montcheuil's study of Malebranche on “Disinterested love of man on earth” (*MQ* 249–308). Earthly loves need to be ordered in such a way that the hierarchy of perfections is respected (*MQ* 253). This principle establishes a close relation between the soul's love of God and its love of justice and order: in fact, true love of God is nothing other than the love of order and justice. This is because the idea of God as justice—or, more specifically, as sovereign justice—provides a better means of regulating the soul's particular loves than any other idea of God which the imagination presents to the mind (*MQ* 255–6). Justice establishes the ordering of loves in the world

and the right priorities and relations between their objects. The divine origin of justice means, however, that the *just order cannot be equated with a particular state of affairs existing at a particular time*. Montcheuil continues:

Order is not a simple object of contemplation, but a rule for action. The divine will acts necessarily, and in a sense infallibly, in conformity with Order. In so doing, God does not obey a foreign law, but remains faithful to his proper nature: the law which directs him, he began by establishing, not by a contingent decision, but by virtue of his being itself. For humankind, it is different: Order imposes itself like an obligation to which it submits; it is not legislator. It is in this sense heteronomous. (*MQ* 256)

Malebranche's opposition to quietism thus becomes clearly apparent: love is intrinsically active, and requires obedience to a divine will. The quietist identification of the love of God with pure, disinterested love suggests, Montcheuil implies, a confusion of earthly human love with the love of the saints in heaven, which he had discussed in the preceding chapter. Only for the saints can the love of God be identified with pure love, rather than with concrete precepts of justice. In earthly life, the heteronomy to which Montcheuil refers will always operate, imposing on humanity the *obligation to make the best possible use of its free will in accordance with the rule which order provides for it*.

Montcheuil nevertheless identifies, in his defence of Malebranche against Lamy, a tension in Malebranche's own theory of love between the pursuit of justice and of happiness. Malebranche had perceived an unproblematic relation between the two: the soul working to promote justice would be seeking the best particular representation of its love of God, and would thus gain happiness. Montcheuil reacts critically to this supposition:

If pleasure were the end of love and of the action which inspires it, one would wish that God change, that he cease always to provide the model of justice for us, in order that we be happier, as we deserve. If this is not the case, then that is because God is truly the end of love. (*MQ* 267)

Montcheuil here identifies a division denied by Malebranche between the soul's happiness and its ultimate desire for salvation by God. Expressing this distinction in practical terms, there are situations in which the soul's love of God *prevents* it from loving itself by seeking happiness. Montcheuil thus relocates love within an eschatological horizon on which indispensable to the soul's love of God is its hope for salvation (*MQ* 274). He suggests that, in cases where a conflict exists between earthly happiness and earthly order, consistency requires that Malebranche privilege order over happiness. The glory of God is nothing other than the realization of order, Montcheuil asserts, and its pursuit demands that the soul desires salvation above all else (*MQ* 287).

Montcheuil's thesis was not in fact published until 1946, two years after his death. He nevertheless pursued his attack on an apolitical notion of love in subsequent articles published during his lifetime. Among the most striking of these is an extended critique of Max Scheler's *Ressentiment*.⁸ Montcheuil sympathizes with Scheler's concern to invigorate the Christian notion of love with the senses of passion, spirit and nobility which conceptions of love frequently connoted in classical Greek antiquity. Love cannot, however, be understood in the vitalistic way which Scheler advocates. In identifying Christian morality with the affirmation of the human spirit, he fails to privilege justice above human flourishing, Montcheuil protests, and in fact effectively dispenses with justice altogether. Scheler "loosens or cuts the bond of real love and its repercussions for the structure of earthly societies and social relationships" (*MT*

205). Montcheuil, whilst accepting that Jesus did not intend to institute a new political order, asserts in contrast: “Love will be an effort to penetrate everything in the life of humanity in order to become the principle of all action. Nothing can remain indefinitely outside this zone of influence.” (*MT* 208)

LOVE, JUSTICE AND ACTION IN BLONDEL

Montcheuil’s study of Maurice Blondel inspired him to develop further his understanding of the relation between faith and action. Blondel’s principal achievement was to provide a philosophical demonstration that the value of action is absolute and its effects universal, on the grounds that the intention motivating action is given to the subject rather than originating within him, and always exceeds the boundaries within which particular concrete actions are conceived.⁹ This interest in Blondel had been germinating for several years: Montcheuil had told Blondel, in a letter written whilst still in the early stages of producing the Malebranche thesis, that his philosophy of action “has a significant place in the conception of the interior life that I am little by little constructing.”¹⁰

In 1934, the year in which Montcheuil was awarded his doctorate, he collaborated with Auguste Valensin—who had also introduced Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to Blondel—to produce a collection of extracts from Blondel’s *L’Action*.¹¹ Montcheuil identifies, in these extracts, five key stages in the progressive development of the philosophy of action: the nature and necessity of the moral problem; the realization that action is the only legitimate human response to this problem; the social repercussions of action; the demands of fidelity to one’s action, and to God as its absolute sustaining principle; and the social bonds with which action establishes society, politics, the *patrie*, and the

whole human community. This publication was significant in being one of the earliest appropriations of Blondel's philosophy of action by a theologian, making Montcheuil "one of the first and the principal propagators of Blondelian thought within francophone catholic circles."¹² Blondel was a controversial figure, and moves were afoot in Rome around this time to place his oeuvre on the Index. The immanentist method of his philosophy of action appeared to undermine the classic distinction between nature and grace by arguing for divine activity within the world and, in particular, in human action. Blondel was moreover immersed in left-wing politics, having taught Marc Sangnier, founder of the *Sillon* movement, and being a contributor to its journals, conferences and educational programmes, as well as to the *Semaines Sociales*. The Jesuit Superior General Wladimir Ledochowski tried to block the book's publication notwithstanding the positive verdict delivered by its *réviseurs*, but was too late to do so as publication was by that time already in progress. He instructed, however, that no second edition be permitted.¹³

Early in the summer of 1938, Montcheuil traveled to Jersey with the intention of revising his Malebranche thesis for publication. Following two months' work, he however decided that he could no longer continue with the project, and returned to Paris. Reflecting on the reasons for his departure from Jersey, he states that he became unable to proceed with his writing in the midst of the developing European political crisis. Hitler had annexed Austria in March of that year and brutally suppressed all opposition, and France had taken little action beyond routine diplomatic protests. Over the summer, Jews living in Austria were being required to register their property, and those in Italy were subjected to new discriminatory legislation, including in some cases expulsion. In September, large numbers of French reservists began to be mobilized, as Nazi preparations

advanced to seize Czechoslovakia. Montcheuil protests with anguish about the collapse of a political facade of intelligence, honour, duty and fidelity, in the face of which “nobody seems to be aware of what has really happened.” He continues in his letter: “We have been dragged down into this degradation by a generation that will stop at nothing, including treason, in order to ensure that its own social privileges are protected.”¹⁴ In Paris, Montcheuil’s writing and teaching assumed a more overtly social and political character, being intended to exhort Christians to live out the implications of their faith in troubled times, and to support them pastorally in so doing. He appealed more widely to what Stephen Schloesser has described as the cultural “mystic realism” that had developed during the interwar period: “the attempt to strip away what was false and ornamental and to grasp a sure and lasting reality.”¹⁵

This clearer religious focus is identifiable in a second edited collection of Blondel’s work, published in 1942, the year of Ledochowski’s death. This volume incorporated a wider range of sources than the 1934 volume, but its principal theological trajectory lies in Montcheuil’s clearer insistence on the specifically *theological* character of action. Blondel had sought to demonstrate the insufficiency of conceptions of morality that failed to identify action as the fundamental moral good. He had argued, moreover, that the effects of action could not be confined within particular boundaries but were universal, and that implicit in every action was the activity of an absolute principle, that is, God. Montcheuil, in contrast, now inverts the terms of Blondel’s argument, which were from action to God, wishing no longer to demonstrate the necessity of divine activity to human actors, but the necessity of action to the people of God. Blondel’s material is now organised in four sections: the necessity of the religious problem and the insufficiency of attempted naturalist solutions; the truly

religious life and its conditions; religious knowledge; and religious action.

Montcheuil prefaces the collection with an introductory essay which offers a detailed interpretation of Blondel's oeuvre, with several continuing themes from his thesis identifiable, above all the importance of will in moral action (*PR* 12–15). In general, moreover, Montcheuil's insistence that faith in God necessarily demands moral action can be seen as a further iteration of his argument about the relation between love and action in Malebranche: love is an active regard for the just ordering of creation. Finally, the function which Blondel advocates for action seems to be analogous with that assigned to justice by Malebranche, enabling the love of God to be rooted in material reality. The significance of action lies in the translation between hypothetical and real faith which it effects: "All the relations posited become, as it were, hypothetically real. *Thought* ends become *real* ends: conditions which have been shown to be necessary in order to attain them thus become obligatory means [*moyens*]." (*PR* 28)

SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE

Paris fell to Hitler's army in June 1940. Within a month, a new government was in place with the country divided into an occupied zone in the north, including the capital, and a self-governing southern zone centred on the spa town of Vichy. The latter included the major Jesuit centre of Lyons. Montcheuil was confronted in Paris with new practical and intellectual questions about the type of witness that he should be giving against Nazism. Resistance groups increasingly employed operational methods just as questionable as those of the Gestapo, and close involvement in their activities would have compromised the specifically Christian and spiritual character of Montcheuil's own resistance. He recognized that his

calling as a priest lay in building up the faith of the people of God by nurturing the roots of their faith and presenting to them its practical implications. The fight against Nazism became for him a battle for faith and for Christian consciences.

The most noteworthy project to which Montcheuil contributed was the distribution of the *Cahiers du témoignage Chrétien*, the underground journal which Pierre Chaillet and Henri de Lubac were instrumental in founding in November 1941. Montcheuil was unable to take part in the journal's foundation because he was living in France's northern "occupied" zone, but assumed a major role in fostering secret networks for the distribution of the *Cahiers* in Paris and the north of the country.¹⁶ The *Cahiers* became a primary means of disseminating reliable information about the occupation of France and the Nazi genocide elsewhere, encouraging and exhorting French Christians to conscientious witness, and providing accurate versions of papal pronouncements, which in newspapers were subject to heavy censorship if they appeared at all. The editors acknowledged the role also played by Vatican Radio—in De Lubac's phrase the "true older brother of the *Cahiers*"¹⁷—in this task. Under the director of its French section, Father Emmanuel Mistaen, the organisation disseminated both broadcasts and, from Marseilles, printed texts of the most significant.¹⁸ The Vatican resisted continuous German pressure to close it down.

The *Cahiers* included news of resistance to Nazism in other European countries, and excerpts from the inspirational writings of Karl Barth, disseminated from his retreat in Basel. In particular, the second issue included extracts from a long letter of Barth's to French Protestants, in which he proclaimed: "Faced with the troubles and obligations of our times, we may not remain as outsiders or spectators. Even those who would like to remain neutral with respect to them, in reality are not... War brings people to a point of clear

decision: a 'yes' or a 'no', along with all its consequences. We are all implicated in this opposition, we are all responsible for its birth and existence; and all of us, from one side of the divine or the other, participate in its abolition, whether by collaboration, active participation, guilt, or as victims."¹⁹ The *Cahiers*, whilst catholic-directed, thus promoted an ecumenical witness against Nazism.

Montcheuil contributed an anonymous article on communism, which some resistance groups saw as the future of French politics, to one of the *Courriers du témoignage Chrétien*.²⁰ (The *Courriers* were similar to the *Cahiers* in being clandestine publications, but were shorter in length, produced for a wider readership, and addressed more overtly political issues.) Despite his deep commitment to action and justice, Montcheuil states unambiguously that Christians cannot accept communist ideology: it is atheist, affirms an ultimate human achievement on earth, grounds human transformation in economic conditions, and suggests that all means are legitimate in pursuit of this end. Certain communist aspirations, such as those for justice and fraternity, nevertheless express authentic values which can be appropriated in the struggle against Nazi persecution.²¹

Montcheuil's decision to pursue a solely spiritual form of resistance is illustrated by the equal suspicion with which he regards both the right-wing opponents of the communists within the resistance and the communists themselves. The reactionary movements possess, like communist ones, he asserts, purely material values, employ any available means in their efforts to attain their political ends, and defend an exclusivist conception of political order. The unions and conflicts within the resistance movement were complex, and lend added practical justification to Montcheuil's theological espousal of spiritual resistance rather than direct political action.

What does he intend here by charging the opponents of communism, who included in their number many conservative catholics, with holding purely material values? The argument is not as developed as it might be: De Lubac notes the “sometimes insurmountable obstacles encountered in communication between the two zones” partitioning the country when transmitting and editing urgent and compromising texts.²² There are clear undertones here of De Lubac’s own developing critique of the “pure nature” concept that a “natural” realm existed independently of divine action, which operated in a separate “spiritual” order. What is wrong with purely material values is that they are not founded in a recognition that the whole of nature is necessarily infused with divine grace. This theology has clear antecedents in Blondel’s immanentist method, many critics of which failed to see that establishing an independently-constituted realm of pure materiality, far from safeguarding divine autonomy and pure activity in the face of pantheist temptations, had the effect of imposing limitations on divine power in the form of a realm on which divine activity could have no effect. Montcheuil wishes to draw attention to the political implications of this theology: his theological opponents were also his political opponents,²³ supposing that spiritual values were applicable to the church only and had no implications for the larger created order.

In a striking editorial in another *Courrier*, Montcheuil urges his readers to study the Apocalypse of John.²⁴ The drama in which the people of God are currently living is, he states, “not only a national drama, since it is at the same time and above all, to the highest degree, a spiritual drama.” He then identifies the two beasts of chapter 13 with the totalitarian domination of both earthly life and spiritual life: “Thus does the totalitarian monster complete itself which is unsatisfied so long as it does not possess, together with all other goods, ‘the

bodies and the souls of men’.” The positive eschatological vision which Revelation presents is also crucial, however. A unifying theme in Montcheuil’s clandestine writings is that resistance will ultimately destroy itself if based on nothing more than the hatred of enemies. Truly moral action demands the love of justice. He proclaims in a later *Cahier*:

We do not have the right to tolerate injustice of which others are victims when we can correct it. Not to fight against it is to become complicit in it.... Justice is indivisible, and not to will it to establish its reign in every domain is to sacrifice it everywhere. The duty imposes itself on all humanity, but it would be particularly inexcusable for a Christian to divest themselves of it.²⁵

Montcheuil here expresses, in terms derived from his study of Malebranche, the priority of justice in the ordering of a world concretely founded on love. It is the love of God which unifies the divided soul and enables the soul to act on the world which it inhabits, whereas sin brings about the soul’s fragmentation. Compromise with any sinful element of social or personal life therefore brings with it a refusal of the responsibility presented by the possibility of true, faithful action. The soul’s externally-directed force, by means of which it acts on the world and shapes it, originates in divine action and is dependent on the continued unifying action of divine love.²⁶

Christian faith thus consists in the combination of the contemplative and active lives. Contemplation provides an impulsion into ever more active spiritual engagement with the world, in the *in actione contemplativus* tradition of Ignatius’s disciple Jerome Nadal. Contemplation does not precede nor succeed action, but accompanies it.²⁷ Montcheuil states in his essay “Temporal Action”:

The Christian can neither be a “mystic” who isolates himself in a temporal and solitary anticipation of the Union with God ... nor an “activist” who lives only for the increase of brotherly relationships in the world and who attributes all the worth of religion to the fact that it makes these relationships possible by the light of its doctrine and by the aid of its fervour. The Christian should combine a religious life lived for itself and directed toward eternity with a temporal activity required by the religious life in itself.²⁸

Montcheuil’s most robust embrace of the active life is his controversial essay “Nietzsche and the Critique of the Christian Ideal.”²⁹ This paper was suppressed by the editors in charge of catholic publishing in Paris, a fact to which De Lubac draws attention in his letter of protest to his superiors of 25 April 1941 challenging their failure to support action opposing Nazism and the Vichy regime.³⁰ The paper was therefore published in *Cité nouvelle*, the substitute journal for *Études* in the southern zone, on 25 June 1941 as the first in a series of studies which, De Lubac notes, established a more explicitly political agenda for the publication (*MT* 364). Montcheuil focuses his argument on Nietzsche’s critique of the value system he associated with Christian religion. Nietzsche complained that Christian morality required conformity to a particular moral code and the privileging of passivity above action. The most profound words of the evangelists are, he protests, not to resist evil: “The incapacity for resistance here becomes morality.”³¹ Christian morality is, according to this interpretation and echoing Scheler’s analysis, one of “resentment,” being a reaction against the morality of the noble soul constructed by pagan religion (*MT* 168).

De Lubac was also immersed in Nietzsche at this time, publishing the following January his own essay in *Cité nouvelle*, “Nietzsche et Kierkegaard,”

which would contribute to his *Affrontements mystiques* and eventually *Drama of Atheist Humanism*.³² The chronological sequence suggests that his own interest here was inspired by that of Montcheuil.

Montcheuil accepts many elements of the Nietzschean analysis of what Christian morality can in practice become. He disputes, however, Nietzsche's presumption that the essence of Christian morality is to be found in the faults of Christian moral practice and teaching. On the contrary, all moral systems are rendered provisional by divine grace. Montcheuil concurs with Nietzsche's affirmation of the moral dignity of the freely acting soul: "The soul is not noble because it accomplishes acts conforming to an ideal of nobility. Acts are noble because they emanate from a noble soul: they lose their value if they are copied from outside, supposing that this is possible." (MT 166) Montcheuil further acknowledges, approvingly, Nietzsche's admiration for Revelation on the grounds that the book is motivated by a new understanding of Christian love as a positive force of strength and judgment.³³ This close connexion between love, justice and eschatology is exactly what Montcheuil himself wishes to establish.

Having appropriated elements of Nietzschean philosophy for his own use, Montcheuil acknowledges the fundamental incompatibility of Nietzschean and Christian teaching. It would be naïve to suppose that Nietzsche's protests could be shorn of their furiously aggressive excesses and transformed into a new genre of Christian spirituality. Nevertheless, "with all doctrines which, whilst wholly rejecting Christian dogma, retain Christian values, a partial agreement is possible in the domain of practice, when it is a matter of results in which commonly-accepted values are expressed." (MT 181) Montcheuil describes the theological relevance of these particular secular doctrines as follows:

Nietzsche makes us attentive to a falsification that cannot be described simply as possible, but that we are continually realizing, and against which we must always fight: the justification and canonization of our weaknesses and our cowardice under the mask of virtues which carry a Christian name.... Grace, which we promise on behalf of Christ to the discouraged, is not an aid which would spare him from any part of the work and allow him to fulfill his own task more comfortably: it is that which acts to accomplish a greater effort. It gives, but it is firstly an effort which it gives. Such is its divine paradox. (*MT* 183)

Progress in the moral life brings a person closer to God's revelation (*MA* 159), with no other more explicitly religious motive or awareness possible.

In his 1941 essay "God and the moral life", Montcheuil describes formation in the moral life in terms of the development of a moral sense, which he defines as an immediate and direct intuition of moral values that is not dependent on external tradition or reasoning (*MT* 146). He thus wishes to demonstrate how Christians are not reliant solely on church teaching for ethical guidance. Moreover, recourse to church teaching is by implication insufficient to mitigate acts of omission. Humanity, in cultivating its moral sense, opens itself to the grace of God in Christ, and the moral life itself becomes an expression of faith (*MT* 157).

A standard objection brought against this position is that it undermines a necessary contrast between religious commitment and moral action. Montcheuil vigorously defends his high valuation of the moral life against such critiques, however, arguing that moral life is infused with the grace of God and need to be transformed by that grace. Clear similarities can be seen here with the earlier argument about the materialism of the scholastic opponents of atheist

communists: both rest on the notion of an unmediated separation of the spiritual and natural orders

Most moral decisions are nonetheless determined, in practice, by the oppositional “pure nature” conception of moral reasoning inherent in obligation, rather than by the moral sense, and are experienced as a movement of will against inclination, or of duty against personal pleasure. Nothing is wrong with this practical deontology, because obligation is the first moral fact to strike humanity and command its attention. Indeed, deontology captures the notions fundamental to moral reasoning that moral principles originate beyond nature and that nature must therefore conform to them, rather than they to nature. The sense of obligation fails to illumine, however, the ultimate principle on which morality rests (*MT* 152). The belief that obligation is the primary motivating factor in the moral life is therefore mistaken. Experience of morality as obligation suggests that the moral law is set against the self, but nevertheless lived by the self and continually created by divine grace. The most important practical effect of this teaching is that the Christian experiences a moral call to perform supererogatory acts which far exceed in their demands any negative moral requirements *not* to act in particular ways (*MT* 356).

Montcheuil here demonstrates his awareness of Bergson’s doctrine of the two sources of morality and religion: a morality of movement founded on a positive desire to participate in collective spiritual action, which Bergson favours, against a static morality which ultimately undermines human life and creativity (*MT* 141, 199). Yet, contra Bergson, the natural movement of the soul by the moral sense is an initiative of divine grace. Only grace will enable humanity to attain its final end and the supreme values of communion with God, loving possession of God, and participation in divine life (*MA* 136). Because human

existence is both temporal and eternal, the image of communion with God enjoyed in current temporal life (*MA* 139) will finally be replaced by the likeness of fully realized communion for which humanity strives (e.g. *AC* 164, 171). Humanity is called to seek, “in the temporal and in part through the temporal, an end which will only be reached beyond the temporal; of pursuing in and through work on oneself, on others, on the world, an end which will not be attained by work but rather thanks to an intervention from on high, an end that nevertheless cannot be obtained if this work is scorned” (*AC* 166).

CHURCH, STATE AND THE KINGDOM

Totalitarian state persecution presented classic catholic political theology with a tremendous challenge. Political questions facing the French church had typically concerned the right of the church to independent existence and intervention in the temporal realm in the face of a strong nation-state.³⁴ Indeed, as already discussed, Montcheuil had conducted his formation in Jersey and Canterbury rather than in France due precisely to the Third Republic’s expulsion of the religious teaching orders from the country. This was quite different from the German situation, in which dialectical theology emerged as a response to an excessively close relationship between church and government in the far younger Prussian state: a Hegelian synthesis of church with government and theology with philosophy leading, in the catholic case, to the 1933 concordat severely limiting ecclesial independence.³⁵

German churches had not, however, experienced ongoing persecution like the church in France. The French church had been occupied with attempts to defend its independent existence in the civil sphere since the Revolution, in areas

like education. Two recent initiatives of Pope Pius XI (in office 1922–39) provided the church-state debate in France with fresh impetus. The 1924 encyclical *Maximam gravissimamque* had gone some way towards accommodating the church to the relation between church and state which existed in France following the 1905 law of separation between the two and the 1920 restoration of diplomatic relations, by accepting the creation of diocesan associations, providing these operated in conformity with canon law. The 1929 Lateran Treaty, enacted between the Vatican and Italy, clarified the political status of the Holy See, following the formation of the Italian state in 1870 and the resurgence of Italian nationalism under Benito Mussolini, by establishing the Vatican as an independent and neutral city state.

The responsibility of Christians to defend basic human dignities and natural rights against the state had not, in contrast, assumed much prominence in catholic political theology. The understanding of political theology as concerned with the *temporal* rights of the church vis-à-vis the state could not, however, be sustained any longer. Montcheuil considered the Nazi persecution, and Vichy complicity in it, to be bound up with a crisis in modern society of a fundamentally *spiritual* character which the church had primary responsibility to address. He reflects, in his essay “Problems of the state”, on the deep, inner collective life intrinsic to Christian identity. Christian faith is lived in community, and its concept of humanity is fundamentally that of the person, “neither lost in the group nor isolated as an individual, neither the means to an end which is beyond him nor an end to himself apart from other men” (*GS* 27).

The totalitarian state is naturally hostile to both the church and to the human person, seeking to identify the will of the individual with the will of the state, to eradicate all meaningful private life, and to replace all community

association with an isolated individualism of the direct dependence of the individual on the state. An adequate response to Nazism therefore required acceptance by the church of its political responsibility to intervene in the events taking place, in a way that did not compromise, but preferably restated, its specifically spiritual witness in society. Not to fight against injustice would imply complicity in it. To consign God to the role of supporting a social religion of obedience to those in authority would be “moral treason.” God can never be assigned the utilitarian function of being a guarantor of temporal power (*MT* 143–4), but places that power under judgment.

In his essay “The church and the temporal order,” Montcheuil refuses any suggestion that the church should be able to undertake its spiritual witness by gaining control of the details of state policy, or that the temporal authority of the state is delegated to it by the church. The state receives its power from God, not from the Church, and is rightly assigned responsibility for providing humanity with the temporal conditions needed to enable it to pursue its supernatural end (*AC* 175–6). Montcheuil nevertheless continues to oppose a quietist spirituality in later essays, arguing for the surrender of a “social quietism” of faith focused on the inner life of the soul. The themes of justice, order and love from his work on Malebranche are again apparent, when he states unequivocally:

The wish for personal sanctification, if it is to fulfil all that is demanded of it, requires not only an inner struggle against personal faults and, in social relationships, an effort of individual charity for those with whom Providence has placed us in contact, but also a fight against all the injustices, all the distorted institutions which are opposed on the human plan to the communion of men and which give rise to isolation, envy, hatred. There is no enlightened sanctification without attention not only to

our individual relationships with our neighbour, but also to the state of the social relationships and the institutions which express them. (*MA* 142)

In particular, love can never become a substitute for justice (*GS* 19). The defence of justice is, Montcheuil argues, the duty of all people, and especially all Christians, and will not be assisted by ecclesial control of the political realm.

The Vichy regime certainly treated the church with greater respect than had the Third Republic, and many members of its hierarchy were therefore slow to launch effective criticism and thus discredited in the eyes of increasing numbers of the faithful.³⁶ Arguably, the best policy that the bishops could constructively adopt in public was one of realism, seeking to safeguard their Church's basic functions of prayer and sacramental worship, with occasional more outspoken witness if this was not likely to lead to serious reprisals that would undermine essential activities.³⁷ Montcheuil does not criticize the bishops for alleged inaction, despite his own activism. In light of this absence of contrary evidence, it is reasonable to suppose his view of the matter to have been close to that of De Lubac, expressed in 1988, who argues that frequent criticisms of the policies of the hierarchy, and especially Cardinal Gerlier of Lyons, imply a "lack of retrospective imagination, an astonishing ignorance of the circumstances and real possibilities" from "historians who have a tendency to set themselves up as examining judges without managing to reconstruct the atmosphere of the period."³⁸ De Lubac highlights Gerlier's successful opposition to the *service du travail obligatoire*, rebuttal of Vichy attempts to reach a concordat with the Holy See, personal support of key figures in left-wing organisations, close relations with the leaders of Jewish consistories, ecumenical collaboration with Pastor Marc Boegner, diocesan speeches, personal interventions to Marshall Pétain, and

death threats from collaborationist sections of the press, among sections of which his historic honorific designation was distorted to “Primate of De Gaulle.”

Montcheuil realized that social witness needed to be a primarily lay initiative and the shared vocation of all Christians, and could not be regarded as solely clergy business.³⁹ The mobilization of lay Christians in any case became a prominent feature of political theology in France, led by Montcheuil and other intellectuals in religious orders, who Julian Jackson recognizes formed the “greatest source of Catholic dissent towards Vichy.”⁴⁰ Montcheuil was one of a group of French theologians whose ecclesiology was influenced by Johann Adam Moehler (1796–1838). He draws a clear distinction, in an essay on Moehler, between the unity of the church, and the uniformity of its outward forms, suggesting that unity, which the church should be pursuing, does not require uniformity. What unity does require, however, is an identity of interior inspiration.⁴¹ This inspiration would be given to the church, in the current situation, by its work for justice. Providing that inspiration is present, there is no danger that greater lay initiative in the church will, in strengthening its witness, undermine its order.

Montcheuil urges Christians to look on the church “with the eyes of faith” in the opening page of his study *Aspects of the Church* (AC 1). This notion, originating in Pierre Rousselot’s controversial eponymous article, suggested that participation in church practices, and other outward forms of assent, needed to be accompanied by an inward “psychological” assent to those practices and forms in order for there to be a true expression of faith. Church teaching could not command the immediate assent of Christians simply by virtue of its own internal and quasi-legal claims to be authoritative.⁴² Montcheuil describes the way in which the faith of the individual believer looks on the world and acts on it with

striking imagery probably derived from an informally-circulated copy of Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*: the human soul burning with fire (*MA* 12), the milieu as a divine mystery present in the world (*MA* 19–25), and the duty of transforming the milieu by means of action, which is both a human initiative and a divine call (*MA* 29–31).⁴³ Later in the same work, he quotes from Teilhard's 1930 essay "The Human Phenomenon": "The greatest danger which humanity may fear is not some exterior catastrophe, famine or plague ... but rather that spiritual sickness (the most terrible because it is the most directly antihuman of all scourges), the loss of appetite for living."⁴⁴ This "appetite for living" is a love of life born of a desire to realize love for God in the most concrete way possible by recognizing that God continues to reveal in the created order a "perpetual transformation of the temporal" (*MA* 140).

Montcheuil states that "the Christian has already entered the eternal at the same time [as] he continues to live in the temporal" (*MA* 144; also *GS* 4). He develops this eschatology most fully in retreats given at a *camp de rentrée* for the École de Sèvres at Solemnes during the first half of October 1943, pursuing the theme at a teachers' gathering during Lent 1944. These essays form part of Montcheuil's final theological testimony before his death in August 1944. The kingdom of God possesses, he argues, absolute value for the Christian, and can be obtained only by the renunciation of all other kingdoms. Referring to Karl Barth, Montcheuil asserts that the message of the kingdom is a *crisis*: a moment of absolute choice which shatters absolutely all human values and expectations (*RE* 43). This message might be assumed to compel active intervention in the temporal order so that it becomes modelled more closely on the values of the kingdom, such as unity and peace. On the contrary, Montcheuil identifies different imperatives of the kingdom in a crucial chapter "The kingdom and the

temporal order” (*RE* 83–92), warning, as he did in his critique of Malebranche, *against* assimilating the kingdom to any temporal reality:

Entry into the Kingdom is a new birth. It is the source of a life which is superior to a well-organized natural life, a life which belongs to a different, supernatural order. It is the principle of a prayer which has no other end but itself, which corresponds with the soul’s need to be present to God even as God is present to it. When one has understood this, one can see that the spiritual life is irreducible to the social life.... To confuse the coming of the Kingdom with the establishment of a better social order is to ignore totally the originality and the value of the Kingdom.⁴⁵

The eschatological character of Christian claims requires that the substance and end of the kingdom transcend material life, even though they commence on earth. The inauguration of the kingdom on earth occurs in mystery, and not according to any objective prescription for society or politics. Nazi ideology refused to recognize precisely this fact. Montcheuil’s argument is not, in other words, only with the particular form of society and government which Nazism attempted to create, but with *any religious or quasi-religious attempt to establish such a society*. The establishment of a perfect social order is, he states, impossible (*RE* 91). The genuine kingdom is born within the Christian heart so intimately and so deeply that no visible entity can be counted as evidence of its coming (*RE* 99). In Montcheuil’s *Leçons sur le Christ*, delivered to a group of teachers and students at the Centre Universitaire Catholique early in 1944, the kingdom is clearly identified as the possession of Christ, with its coming on earth being a future eschatological event (also *GS* 13) which is nevertheless anticipated in the world as currently constituted whenever injustice is transformed:

In this broken world, no complicity with injustice can be accepted—even though it demands refusal of the world—because the union realized at the price of injustice can only engender graver disunity; but it must, on the other hand, ask of God the transformation of injustice, in order that it is possible for him one day to unite the world with him in the love of Christ. This applies to both individual and collective relations. There is no effective union with God by Christ without this aspiration to union of the sons of God in their reclaimed innocence. (*LC* 121)

This work to promote justice becomes the work of Christ when the person who undertakes it lives in the new principle of love for God that Christ came to bring into the world.

SACRIFICE

In a letter written as the Vichy regime was installing itself in power, Montcheuil had speculated: “Maybe we will now have the opportunity to learn what it means to risk everything to ensure the liberty of the Word of God. When that moment comes, we will prove that all the things we were saying before the war were not merely the idle chatter of people who enjoy comfort and safety.”⁴⁶ He expresses a sense of impending crisis, both collective and personal, in which fundamental spiritual values would be challenged and the commitment of Christians to the defence of those values tested to the limit (also *AC* 170). With Nazi control over France progressively increasing, Montcheuil reflects on several different occasions on the nature of sacrifice. He thus returns to Blondelian themes, focusing on the concepts of purification and passivity: sacrifice is superior to

egoism, and the suffering of which sacrifice is the exemplary part cannot be understood merely as the voluntary restraint of action.⁴⁷ Suffering is, in contrast

a real metaphysical experiment. He who has had the courage to sacrifice his egoism and pride in order to remain faithful to the demands [*exigences*] of the truth to the extent that he perceives it, finds in the overcoming of life that results the best guarantee that he has not lied to himself, the certitude that he is not living an illusion. (*PR* 31–2)

Montcheuil describes in greater detail in another essay the active and purifying function of suffering:

Evil, being at the root of our activity, is not curable by that activity itself. It is therefore vain to expect evil to correct itself: it is necessary to call for its purification. That is not, evidently, to deny the value and necessity of ascetic practice. Personal effort is needed, but is only something to the extent that it originates in a will that is already purified. If it does not, we can only ever correct a fault with another fault. Saint John of the Cross has illustrated this fundamental truth well, that all true purification is passive, and that in so far as the purification must reach down to the lowest depths of the soul, it assumes a new form of passivity: the night of the senses must be succeeded by the night of the spirit. This teaching is not, as often imagined, a subtle truth applicable only to a few “extraordinary” states of the mystical life: it expresses profoundly the elementary law of all Christian life.

To suffer is to undergo a purifying passivity. Suffering is thus the only instrument of our purification, the means by which we do not avoid a diminution of egoism in the self and the engendering of love. That love is acquired only by the cross, that it is an illusion to hope to see it produced

in the self by any other means, is the affirmation over which Christian asceticism will never compromise. There is a royal way of the cross.

There is no “short way” and will never be one.... Each soul has its cup to drink. If it defers the moment when it takes a sip, it also defers the moment when it begins to love more. To progress towards pain and grief is to progress towards life. It is to plunge oneself into the only purifying crucible which is able to turn us into saints. Suffering is no second-best, no unfortunate accident which arrives to complicate things and add a burden. It is the *way*.⁴⁸

Suffering brings the human soul to a deeper spiritual witness than does happiness, and becomes a requirement of justice. Montcheuil, by identifying suffering as participation in the cross of Christ, the source of justice and truth, pursues his critique of Malebranche’s equation of happiness with justice to its logical conclusion (*MA* 32, 52, 102). His description of “purifying passivity” moreover echoes Blondel’s statement to Teilhard de Chardin reflecting on St John of the Cross that “abnegation alone ... enjoys, possesses, and knows everything through a decentration and a transfer of the self over to God.”⁴⁹

The immediate circumstances surrounding Montcheuil’s capture and execution were as follows.⁵⁰ In July 1944, he was contacted by an acquaintance who had attended some of his lectures, and who had expressed concerns to him that bishops were not appointing chaplains to the maquis resistance movements in the south-east of the country. The absence of chaplains was depriving the movements’ lay members of the sacraments and pastoral ministry. Montcheuil had already established links with some of these members, however, having taken part in holidays and youth camps in the south-east during the summer of 1943 and Easter 1944. Realizing that he was well-placed to assess the situation, he

planned a visit to the Vercors area of about one week's duration, after which he would return to Paris and submit his findings to the church authorities. His visit coincided, however, with an assault on the resistance group based in the area launched on 27 July by Nazi parachutists. Montcheuil and many others took refuge in a large and well-hidden cave being used as a secret hospital, and believed they had evaded detection after the parachutists had passed in front of the cave without identifying it. Several hours later they returned, however, took Montcheuil and several others captive, and after taking them to Grenoble, killed those still remaining at the cave. During questioning, Montcheuil stated truthfully that he was not a member of the resistance group, but conducting a pastoral visit to the group. He was shot by firing squad on 10 August, just ten days before the town's liberation by the Allies.

The chain of events culminating in Montcheuil's death could be regarded as a chance series of unfortunate incidents such as is all too common in times of conflict. A dutiful teacher and pastor, Montcheuil had framed no specific intention to give up his life in the struggle against Nazism. Étienne Fouilloux considers this interpretation of his death, but then offers a quite different one:

It is also, in a certain way, the logical culmination of an intellectual and spiritual engagement contracted at the beginning of the 1920s. When action, in the Blondelian sense of the term, is founded on the human conscience in search of God, it is unsurprising that it is prepared to continue right up to the end of its undertaking under exceptional circumstances.⁵¹

Montcheuil follows the previous great French Jesuit theologian of love, Pierre Rousselot, to an early death in war.⁵² Rousselot served as an officer in the French army and was killed in battle at Épargès in 1915. Montcheuil quotes, in his

critique of Scheler, Léonce de Grandmaison's comment about Rousselot that "the best religious are those who sacrifice and not those who ignore the great attachments of nature."⁵³ It becomes increasingly apparent in Montcheuil's theology that he is preparing himself spiritually to pursue whatever paths of action the divine imperatives of justice and the kingdom present to him, even death.

CONCLUSION

Montcheuil repeats approvingly the assessment of his friend and colleague Henri de Lubac of one of the causes of totalitarian rule: "Rationalism expelled mystery: myth has taken its place."⁵⁴ Montcheuil's response is to reaffirm that at the heart of religion lie love, action and eschatology, which render futile all attempts to interpret the person and human society in purely natural terms. The supernatural must, Montcheuil affirms, be allowed to penetrate the whole of temporal life, being the "result of a possession, of a transformed infusion of the divine in us" (*MA* 35; also *MA* 135, *GS* 55). The source of religion is not, in other words, to be found within pre-existing nature, but has its source beyond nature, acting on nature to transform, renew and redeem it.

In Montcheuil's oeuvre can be seen the political relevance and origins of key themes in modern theology, especially lay ecclesiology and the supernatural. It constitutes, moreover, a significant antecedent to postwar liberation theology, being an early instance of the appropriation of Blondel's philosophy of action to justify the overtly political implications of Christian faith in a time of crisis.⁵⁵ Montcheuil has been identified as a chaplain of the maquis (the underground resistance movement) when in fact he was an accidental martyr, captured during

a single visit to it motivated by specifically spiritual and pastoral concerns. He did not seek to become an activist, but was a figure for whom spiritual concerns became political ones because the context in which spirituality was located had shifted.

De Lubac reflects on the role that Montcheuil “might have played, within the Church and for her influence, in the troubled period after the war (and again after the Council).”⁵⁶ Montcheuil had conceived his theological writing as part of a wider project to synthesize the Augustinian and Thomist traditions by means of a doctrine of love, and to use this, in engagement with modern authors, as the foundation for an exposition of the entire Christian mystery.⁵⁷ He had not begun work on this larger study at the time of his death. What he did leave, however, was a lived testimony of love proven in the sacrificial pursuit of justice for the sake of the church, and above all else, the kingdom of Christ.

10750 words, including references

¹ Abbreviations used for frequently-cited works are: *AC*—*Aspects of the Church* (Chicago, Il.: Fides, 1955); trans. of *Aspects de l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1951); *GS*—*A Guide for Social Action* (Chicago, Il.: Fides, 1954); rare trans. of *L'Église et le monde actuel* (Paris: Témoignage chrétien, 1946), lacking chs. 8 and 9 of original; *LC*—*Leçons sur le Christ*, ed. Joseph Huby (Paris: L'Épi, 1949); *MA*—*For Men of Action* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Dome, 1964); trans. of *Problèmes de vie spirituelle* (Paris: JECF, 1945); *MQ*—*Malebranche et le quietisme* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1946); *MT*—*Mélanges théologiques* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1946); *RE*—*Le Royaume et ses exigences* (Paris: L'Épi, 1957). Most of these works were edited by Henri de Lubac. I am very grateful to an anonymous consultor for comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² Renée Bédarida, “Théologie et guerre idéologique,” in *Henri de Lubac et le mystère de l'Église*, ed. Michel Sales et al. (Paris: Cerf, 1999) 216–17.

³ Henri de Lubac, *Three Jesuits Speak: Yves de Montcheuil, 1899–1944; Charles Nicolet, 1897–1961; Jean Zupan, 1899–1968* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987) 32; Étienne Foullieux, *Yves de Montcheuil, philosophe et théologien jésuite (1900–1944)* (Paris: Médiasèvres, 1995) 45.

⁴ For general biography, see Foullieux, *Yves de Montcheuil*; René d'Ouinice, “Les Enfances religieuses du Père de Montcheuil,” in *Jésuites de l'Assistance de France* 1958/4 3–12; www.fondation-montcheuil.org.

⁵ Nicolas Malebranche, “Illustration,” in *Treatise on Nature and Grace* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 195–204.

⁶ Nicolas Malebranche, *Treatise on Ethics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993).

⁷ Nicolas Malebranche, *Oeuvres* 14 (21 vols.; Paris: Vrin, 1958–70).

⁸ “Le Ressentiment dans la vie morale et religieuse d'après Max Scheler,” in *MT* 187–225; originally in *Recherches de science religieuse* 27 (1937) 128–64, 309–25; see Max Scheler, *Ressentiment* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) 83–113.

⁹ See Maurice Blondel, *L'Action: essai d'une critique de la vie et d'une science de la pratique* (Paris: Alcan, 1893); trans. *Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); cf. *MA* 76–7.

¹⁰ Letter of 25 February 1931, reproduced in Foullieux, *Montcheuil* 67–68.

¹¹ Auguste Valensin and Yves de Montcheuil, *Maurice Blondel* (Paris: Gabalda, 1934).

¹² Foullieux, *Montcheuil* 20.

¹³ Antonio Russo, “Yves de Montcheuil et Maurice Blondel,” in *Blondel entre “L’Action” et la “Trilogie”: Actes du colloque internationale sur les écrits intermédiaires de Maurice Blondel* (Brussels: Lessius, 2003) 125–39, at 137–38.

¹⁴ Letter of 21 November 1938, quoted in De Lubac, *Three Jesuits* 23–24.

¹⁵ Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919–1933* (University of Toronto Press, 2005) 107–108.

¹⁶ De Lubac, *Three Jesuits* 24–25.

¹⁷ Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned his Writings* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993) 118.

¹⁸ See Jacques Adler, “The ‘Sin of Omission’? Radio Vatican and the anti-Nazi Struggle, 1940–1942,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50 (2004) 396–406; Renée Bédariada, “La Voix du Vatican (1940–1942): batailles des ondes et résistance spirituelle,” *Revue de l’Histoire de l’Église de France* 64 (1978) 215–43.

¹⁹ Karl Barth, “Une question et une prière aux protestantes de France,” in *Cahiers* 2 (January 1942), *La Résistance spirituelle, 1941–1944: Les Cahiers clandestins du Témoignage chrétien* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001) 80–83.

²⁰ “Communisme,” in *Courrier* 5 (November 1943), *La Résistance spirituelle* 367–70.

²¹ Montcheuil possessed an abiding concern to caution students engaged in the resistance movement against Marxism. (De Lubac, *At the Service of the Church* 53.)

²² De Lubac, *At the Service of the Church* 99.

²³ John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (London: SCM, 2005) 3. For background, see André Laudouze, *Dominicains français et Action française, 1899–1940: Maurras au couvent* (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1990).

²⁴ “Perspectives,” in *Courrier* 9 (April 1944) 384–86.

²⁵ “Vers le soulèvement de la nation,” *Cahiers* 26–27 (May 1944) 311.

²⁶ “The use of force,” in *GS* 38–42; also “La loi d’amour,” in *MT* 353–61.

²⁷ Jérôme Nadal, *Contemplatif dans l’action: écrits spirituels ignatiens (1535–1575)* (Paris: Desclée, 1994) 19–21.

²⁸ “Temporal action,” *MA* 141; essay originally published as *Vie Chrétienne et action temporelle* (Paris: L’Orante, 1944).

²⁹ *MT* 159–85; originally published in *Cité nouvelle*, 25 June 1941, 1153–87.

³⁰ Henri de Lubac, “Letter to My Superiors,” in *Theology in History* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996) 433.

³¹ *MA* 170; see *The Anti-Christ* 29, in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ* (London: Penguin, 1990) 153.

³² Henri de Lubac, “Nietzsche et Kierkegaard,” *Cité nouvelle*, January 1942, 1–25; *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995) 469–509. See Stephen Schloesser, “Against Forgetting: Memory, History, Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) 310–11.

³³ *MA* 171–2; *On the Genealogy of Morality, and Other Writings* I.16 (Cambridge University Press, 1994) 35.

³⁴ “Church and state,” in *GS* 58–64, provides an outline of these debates.

³⁵ For the concordat, see *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich: Facts and Documents* (London: Burns Oates, 1940) 516–22.

³⁶ *Religion et société en France, 1914–1945*, eds. Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire (Toulouse: Privat, 2002) 244–52.

³⁷ Jacques Duquesne, *Les Catholiques français sous l’occupation* (Paris: Grasset, 1966) 167–91.

³⁸ Henri de Lubac, “Concerning Cardinal Gerlier,” in *Christian Resistance to Anti-Semitism: Memories from 1940–1944* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990) 165–88, quotations from 179, 185

³⁹ *MA* 21–4, 154–7, 162. For Montcheuil’s wider theology of lay vocation, see his excellent chapter “The catholic concept of vocation,” *MA* 47–66.

⁴⁰ Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944* (Oxford University Press, 2003) 270.

⁴¹ “La Liberté et la diversité dans l’Unité,” in *L’Église et une: Hommage à Moehler*, ed. Pierre Chaillet (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1939) 234–54.

⁴² Rousselot’s original article is reproduced in *The Eyes of Faith; Answer to Two Attacks* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990) 19–82. The “act of faith” doctrine had been banned within the Society of Jesus as recently as 1920 by means of a ruling binding on all its members, issued following an assessment conducted by an international committee of theologians at the request of the Superior General. (Avery Dulles, “Principal Theses of the Position of Pierre Rousselot,” in Rousselot, *Eyes of Faith* 113.) Here is a good example of how the imperative of witness combined with the impossibility of systematic theological regulation in the wartime situation encouraged creative theological development.

⁴³ Montcheuil and Teilhard had met in Paris in the summer of 1928, shortly after Teilhard's return from China, where he had produced the manuscript. (Letters of 29 September 1928 and 22 November 1936 in *Lettres intimes à Auguste Valensin, Bruno de Solages, Henri de Lubac, André Ravier, 1919–1955*, ed. Henri de Lubac (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1972) 178, 322.) For affinities, see especially *The Divine Milieu* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004) 74–112; and on the themes themselves, David Grumett, *Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity and Cosmos* (Leuven and Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2005) 139–68.

⁴⁴ *MA* 111; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Vision of the Past* (London: Collins, 1966) 171.

⁴⁵ *RE* 85–6, quoted in Henri de Lubac, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1984) 109; cf. *MA* 58–9.

⁴⁶ Letter of 3 July 1940, quoted in De Lubac, *Three Jesuits* 59.

⁴⁷ *Pages religieuses* (Paris: Aubier, 1942) 49, 55. For Blondel's enthusiastic reception of the work, see letters to Henri de Lubac of 19 December 1946, 10 March 1948, *At the Service of the Church*, 378, 320–21.

⁴⁸ “La loi d’amour,” in *MT* 360–1; originally in *Cité nouvelle*, 10 June 1942, 1052–63; also *MA* 115.

⁴⁹ Paper of 5 December 1919, in *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin – Maurice Blondel: Correspondence* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1976) 26.

⁵⁰ First-hand accounts are provided in Juliette Lesage, “La Grotte de la Luire,” and Pierre Tanant, “La Père du Montcheuil et le chef militaire du Vercors,” in *Spiritualité, théologie et résistance: Yves de Montcheuil, théologien au maquis du Vercors* (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1987) 246–50. See also De Lubac, *Three Jesuits* 30–31; Foullieux, *Montcheuil* 37.

⁵¹ Foullieux, *Montcheuil* 45.

⁵² Pierre Rousselot, *Pour l’histoire du problème de l’amour au Moyen-Âge*, Extrait des *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 6 (Münster: Ascendorff, 1908); trans. *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2001).

⁵³ *MT* 216; see Léonce de Grandmaison, biographical foreword to Pierre Rousselot, *L’Intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, 2nd edn (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924) vii.

⁵⁴ *GS* 27; Henri de Lubac, “Christian Explanation of Our Times,” in *Theology in History* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996) 444.

⁵⁵ Liberation theology is not, of course, derived in all its forms from Marxist theory. Jürgen Moltmann, for instance, recognizes that it possesses its “own theological dynamic” which appropriates Blondel’s philosophical theology of action. (*Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 2000) 238.)

⁵⁶ De Lubac, *At the Service of the Church* 98.

⁵⁷ Henri de Lubac, foreword to *MQ* 5.